DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 410 387 CE 074 471

AUTHOR David, Lloyd
TITLE Statement by Lloyd David, Ed.D., President/Executive Director, Continuing Education Institute on Adult Education and Literacy.
PUB DATE 1997-05-16
NOTE 19p.
PUB TYPE Opinion Papers (120)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Adult Basic Education; Adult Literacy; *Cost Effectiveness; Demonstration Programs; *Education Work Relationship; Educational Attitudes; Employee Attitudes; *Federal Legislation; High School Equivalency Programs; Literacy Education; *Outcomes of Education; Productivity; Program Effectiveness; School Business Relationship; Work Attitudes; *Workplace Literacy
IDENTIFIERS *National Workplace Literacy Program

ABSTRACT

The National Workplace Literacy Program was very effective for a number of reasons: (1) grants are awarded for 3 years, enabling companies to plan, implement, and evaluate their efforts; (2) the program demanded a partnership of businesses, government, an educational provider, and students/employees; and (3) an educational consortium was established to share ideas. Workplace literacy means education in basic skills that can be used immediately on the job. It increases the job skills and productivity of workers, leading to improved self-esteem and better work attitudes. It is important today when U.S. companies must do more with less in order to compete in the world marketplace because it enables workers to be more flexible and to contribute ideas to increase company profits. The GLOBAL 2000 National Workplace Literacy Program has helped 43 people receive their high school diploma. The companies involved are very happy with their investment in the program. Recommendations for workplace literacy legislation include the following: awarding grants for at least 3 years, requiring that adult literacy legislation mentions workplace education, requiring states to spend a percentage of federal money on workplace education, offering tax incentives for companies to support workplace education, and providing a mechanism to disseminate successful results from workplace literacy projects. (KC)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 410 387

CONTINUING EDUCATION INSTITUTE, INC. SPECIALISTS IN WORKPLACE EDUCATION

STATEMENT BY

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

LLOYD DAVID, Ed.D.
PRESIDENT/EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
CONTINUING EDUCATION INSTITUTE

ON

ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

L David

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

MAY 16, 1997

SENATE LABOR AND HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Chairman Jeffords, Senator Kennedy, and Members of the Committee:

I would like to personally thank the Senate for the support we have received under the National Workplace Literacy Program, and talk today about some results of that program. The National Workplace Literacy Program is a demonstration project designed to set up models for workplace education. We have found the present project to be very effective for various reasons:

- First and most significant, the grants were for **three years**. This meant companies had enough time to plan a complete educational effort and evaluate the results.
- Second, the nature of the program demanded a **collaborative effort** requiring a partnership of businesses, government, an educational provider and the student/employee. In our case the Continuing Education Institute, the educational

Q-074471

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

108 WATER STREET, WATERTOWN, MA 02172
Tel: (617) 926-1864
Fax: (617) 926-1865

provider, enlisted five manufacturers--and later, three additional manufacturing companies-- to partner with us in this educational endeavor.

- A third benefit of this program was to the company-partners. The establishment of an **educational consortium** enabled each organization to learn from each other.

Why workplace education?

Many people are aware that their community offers high school equivalency training and English as a Second Language programs. They are probably also aware that companies train their workers to do their specific tasks, whether it is operating machinery or providing services. But I want to speak about a third kind of training that many people are not aware of: workplace basic education. Training employees to read and write, do mathematical calculations, speak English and acquire the skills that will make them more responsive employees in the worldwide economy.

What is workplace education?

If they have heard of it at all, many people assume "workplace education" means hiring a teacher to run a class at the company or worksite. Actually, workplace education is much more. The definition[1] of workplace education developed by the Massachusetts Workplace Education Committee is: "Workplace Education is a strategic solution for meeting the challenges of rapidly changing technologies and local, national and world

[1] Mass. Workplace Educate Committee

economies by increasing the basic skills and abilities of incumbent workers." What this really means is melding employees' and business' educational needs. Employees need skills that will help them earn more money. Businesses need employees who can read instructions, calculate results and converse with co-workers and internal customers.

For many employees the workplace is the most natural place to learn basic skills. It is convenient since the worker-students are already there and attendance is high. Second, it is motivating, since they can use their new skills immediately on the job. And third the students have topics in common to talk about.

Workplace education helps employees to participate more fully in work life.:

- Students learn how to read the signs posted in their work area.
- They learn job-specific words to talk about each task they perform.
- They learn phrases that will help them communicate with co-workers

Supervisors often explain something or hand over something to read and then ask a question like "Did you get that?" The subordinate may answer "yes," because most low-skilled people are reluctant to say "I don't understand." They may stare at the floor out of politeness and an unwillingness to admit they don't comprehend something.

But as workplace students' abilities to speak, read and write English improve, their confidence and self-esteem grows as well. Prior to classes, they hope nobody will notice them. After a short time learning to speak or read English, they want to participate in meetings and offer their ideas. Ask an employee a question after a few weeks of workplace education. They may respond, "I don't understand," but are more likely to point out discrepancies between a job procedure and actual practices. They become a real part of the team, so that employers have more flexibility in assigning them elsewhere within the organization.

To illustrate some of the benefits derived from a workplace education program I would like to tell you about one of our students, Lily Hunyh, who arrived here from Vietnam in 1979. She works as an assembler for NIDEC/Power General, a small business manufacturing power supplies and small fans. Although her work was considered satisfactory, she decided she wanted to get ahead and enrolled in the workplace education classes offered by the company. In the past when Lily's machine broke down, she used to wait for her supervisor to determine and fix the problem. Getting the attention of a busy supervisor could take quite some time. With newly acquired English skills, Lily has also gained self confidence and now no longer waits. When she has a problem, she goes directly to the person in the engineering department who can tell her how to fix it.

Also before enrolling in the class, Lily used to produce as many fans as she could and then go home. Then the second shift operator would start the production run again. A

lack of communication between shift operators often resulted in an oversupply of certain parts. Now Lily reads the inventory control reports and knows when to stop her production run. She is also able to write notes to the second shift operator explaining how many parts she has produced and how many are left for the second shift to make.. Think of the savings to the company from Lily now being able to ask questions directly and read and write English.

Why is workplace education important?

In today's economy companies are trying to do more with less. US corporations are getting squeezed from increased worldwide competition. As a result, they need to cut costs while continuing to produce better products in a timely fashion. To accomplish this, many companies have downsized and merged operations asking employees to work smarter. With fewer middle managers and supervisors, all employees are called upon to take more responsibility and to perform a greater variety of tasks. Now with unemployment at a very low rate, companies are being forced to hire more marginal workers - those who do not have high school diplomas, and those not fluent in English.

That is where workplace education comes in. Workers learn basic skills relevant to their jobs in the workplace because they cannot learn them anywhere else. Schools are very properly trying to serve the needs of our youth, and don't have the resources to cope with all the demands for adult literacy including the workforce. Most communities have long

waiting lists for adult basic education classes. In Massachusetts, for example, only 3.5% of those who could benefit from adult basic education classes are able to enroll in programs supported with public funds, and there is almost no private funding for basic skills training and education.

Workplace basic education benefits the employer immensely. Having the class right there makes education responsive. What employees learn is most relevant to what they are going to do on the job every day. Companies have input into the curriculum offered. Students learn to respond to work situations and then apply their learning to situations outside of work. With a better-skilled workforce, employers should see greater productivity, less rework and waste.

When I asked the Vice President of NIDEC/ Power General if he saw changes in the employees' work because of the workplace education classes, he told me that the company had planned to set up production teams and felt they needed to add two supervisors in order to do so. After the classes started they found that they could set up the production teams and not add the two new supervisors thereby saving thousands of dollars.

In the GLOBAL 2000 National Workplace Literacy Program demonstration project, the other seven Massachusetts manufacturing partners have also found productivity goes up

when workers get "up-to-speed" on basic language and literacy skills. (GLOBAL 2000 is a partnership of eight companies - American Engineered Components, Analog Devices Inc., Boston Scientific Corporation, Fire Control Instruments, NIDEC/Power General, BIW Cable Systems, M/A Com, Parker-Hannifin Chomerics Division - and an educational provider, Continuing Education Institute (CEI). The project's goal is to educate workers to make them more trainable, more flexible in terms of work assignments, and ultimately more productive.

To do so, GLOBAL 2000 offers classes in English communication, reading comprehension, business writing, and math. In addition, an Adult Diploma Program enables employees to earn a standard high school diploma. The students also learn how to use a computer so they can practice their new skills outside of class time. The programs began in October, 1994. Thus far over 400 workers from the eight companies have enrolled in workplace education classes in reading, writing, English as a Second Language (ESL) and math. In June, 1996, 43 people received their high school diploma through the CEI Adult Diploma Program.

A unique feature of the GLOBAL 2000 project is its management structure. Each company has selected a group of employees to serve on an Employee Involvement Team (EIT) with a representative from CEI. The team's first function is to determine the literacy needs of the company's workforce. Since each company has a different organization and ways of dealing with issues, their EIT uses different strategies. Once

they determine needs, the EIT decides which area to address and how best to do so. The EIT then recruits the employee/students, assists in curriculum development to make certain that the program is pertinent to the company, monitors progress, and helps evaluate the impact.

The Employee Involvement Teams are an important element. Simply serving on the team enables employees to practice leadership skills in communicating and making decisions. EITs helped organizations discover facets of their workforce that supervisors and managers could not. Many members of the team have been promoted to more responsible positions within their companies.

Results

Partner companies report a number of benefits from employees' participation in the CEI Adult Diploma Program. They see an immediate improvement in reading, writing communication and math skills. Students are better able to study and polish their organizational skills. Going through the program and receiving a standard high school diploma from a private high school in Boston opens the door for employees to enter college or get further education in company-sponsored training programs.

Jean Kelly, Training Manager of Boston Scientific Corp. said about the Adult Diploma Program: "It just multiplies our resources without physically adding all kinds of people to

the workforce, and obviously business wants to do that. We can do so much more with the people we have."

A survey of 39 of the 50 graduates from the CEI Adult Diploma Program in 1996 found that 23% already have received job promotions six months later, 31% have continued their education (including 10% enrolled in a degree granting college) and 38% reported they have more responsibility on the job.

Survey participants attributed their progress directly to the Adult Diploma Program. For example, of those promoted since graduation, 89% credited their participation in the program. Of those continuing their education, 75% said going through the Adult Diploma Program prepared them for further courses. And 53% of those with more responsibility at work said the Adult Diploma Program was the reason. See attached Chart #1.

Follow up surveys in the past showed similar results. Thus 346 of the 712 graduates were born in the United States and had dropped out of high school. Thirty-eight percent had continued with their education, over 53% had new responsibilities at work, and none were unemployed at the time of the survey done in 1992.

In the English as a Second Language classes an assessment done this May showed that 82% of the 19 employees at Analog Devices were now able to speak in sentences,

explain problems, describe key terms, follow procedures, and explain company policies. In October, 1996 prior to the beginning of classes, only half of the employees could successfully explain things in English. See Chart #2 and Chart #3.

Ross Brown, Vice President of Human Resources at Analog Devices in a video describing the GLOBAL 2000 program said about the company employees participating in the program: "Many of them have saved us hundreds of thousands of dollars in processes... So a direct link to the bottom line. The greatest way to enhance organizational capability is to enhance individual employee capability. The rewards are not only short term, they go on forever. It's the greatest investment you can make."

My own personal observation is I have seen people, once they get into these programs, completely change, and the change means that they become more productive. They become risk-takers and the risk can be going up and asking somebody a question.

For example. let me tell you about Gasper De Jesus, who arrived in this country from Cape Verde 13 years ago, and now works at Boston Scientific Corp. All English as a Second Language students like Gasper must write and present a paper at graduation. This can be an intimidating experience, because supervisors, group leaders and company officials attend this ceremony. Students make presentations as a final exercise to increase their confidence in speaking in front of groups. In Gasper's case, it worked

spectacularly. He had developed an idea for simplifying a production process. Only after going through the ESL class was he able to mention his idea in a group meeting. As a result, his company eliminated an unnecessary assembly step and saved a great deal of money.

Lois Thoms, the Manager of Human Resources for Fire Control Instruments, will relate to you in greater detail the improvements in productivity realized by that company due to the workplace education program offered to their assemblers. But before she begins I would like to make some recommendations for future legislation.

Recommendations

Company-sponsored training usually has a beginning and an end. For example, somebody learns to use a new software program in a few days, and then the training is over. But workplace education is by definition lifelong learning. There is no clear stopping place. To make basic education viable, courses need to last at least a couple of years.

It is for this very reason that companies are reluctant to get involved in workplace education without some public incentive. US companies spend some $52 billion a year on training, but little of that money goes for basic education. Yet students lacking basic

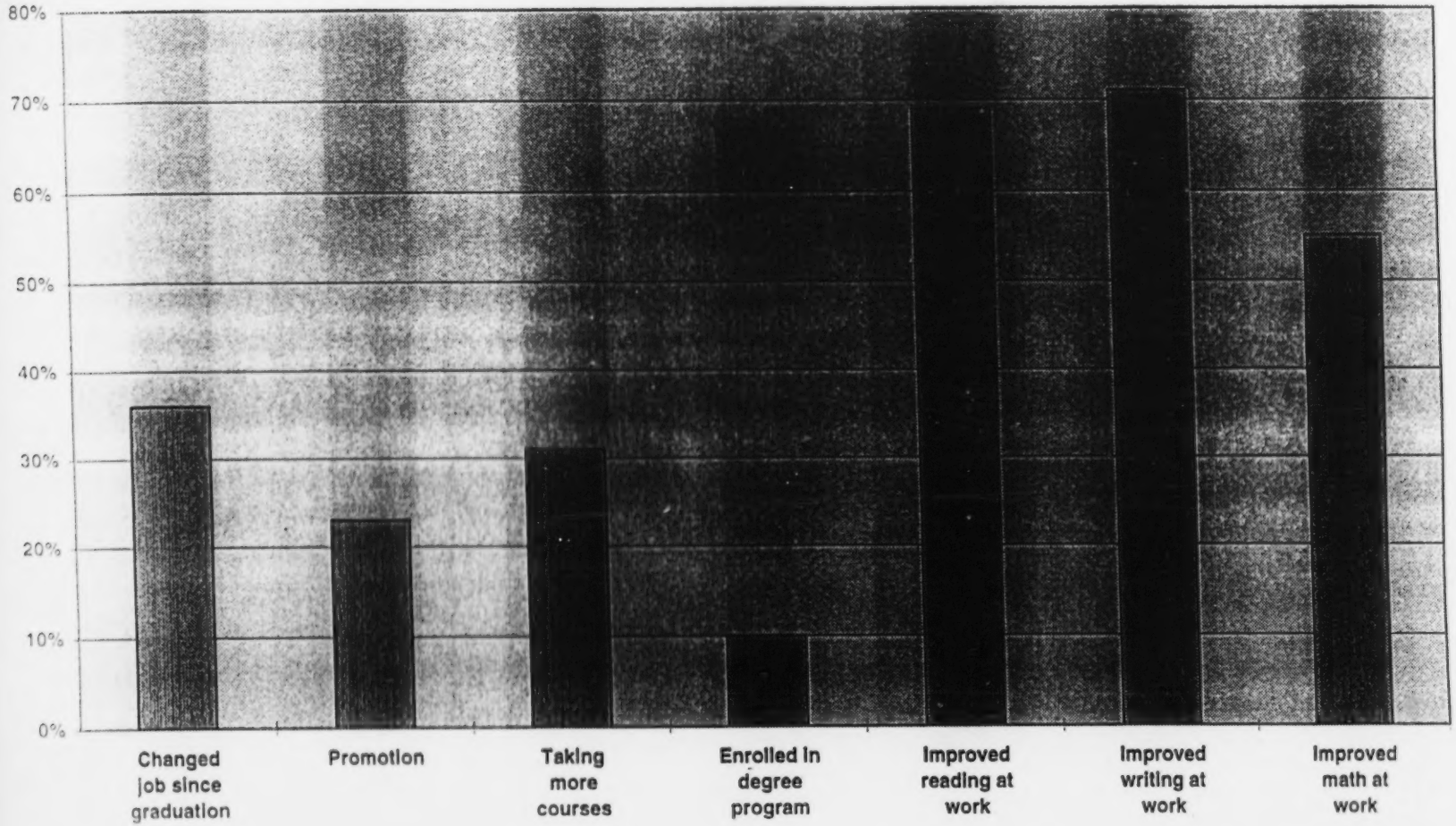
skills are not at a high enough literacy level to take advantage of the training the company ordinarily offers.

As we have proven, workplace education has a high return on investment, but the training likely will take a couple of years to complete. We would, therefore, like to recommend to the U.S. Congress that they support workplace education by:

- Making certain that any legislation on adult literacy or training mention workplace education explicitly.
- Awarding grants for at least three years, because it takes that long to acquire real literacy. The government share of the funding could decrease each year (75% - 50% - 25%) over the three-year period.
- Requiring states to spend a percentage of federal money on workplace education.
- Offering a federal tax incentive to encourage companies to support their own workplace education efforts.
- Providing a mechanism to disseminate successful results from years of National Workplace Literacy.

Chart #1

Survey Results for 1996 Adult Diploma Program Graduates after Six Months (40 out of 49 graduates surveyed)

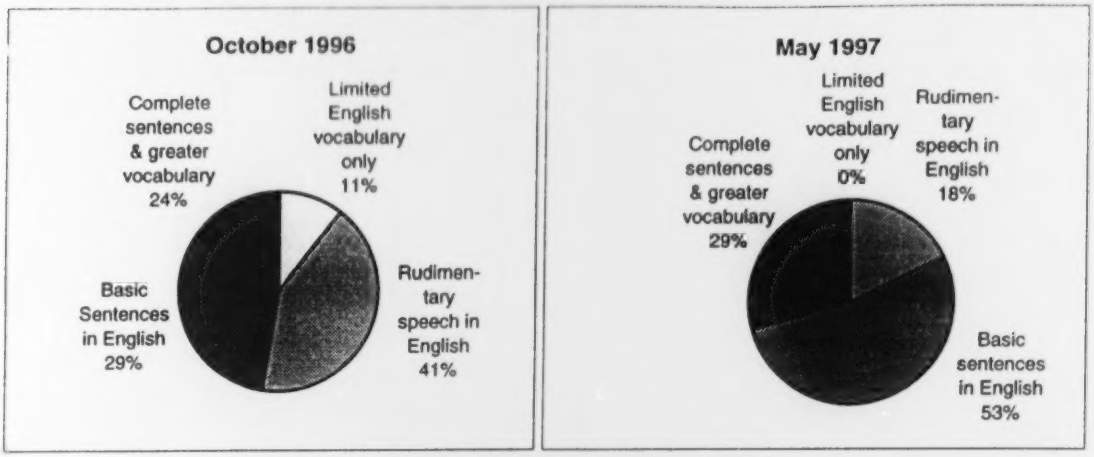


BEST COPY AVAILABLE

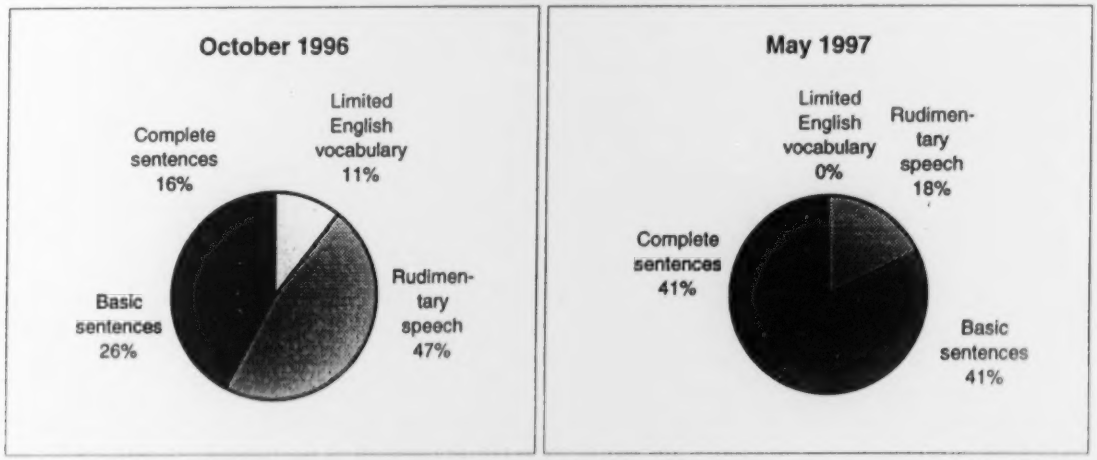
Workplace Assessment: Analog Devices English as Second Language Employee/Participants

May 1997 ***19 Employees Assessed***

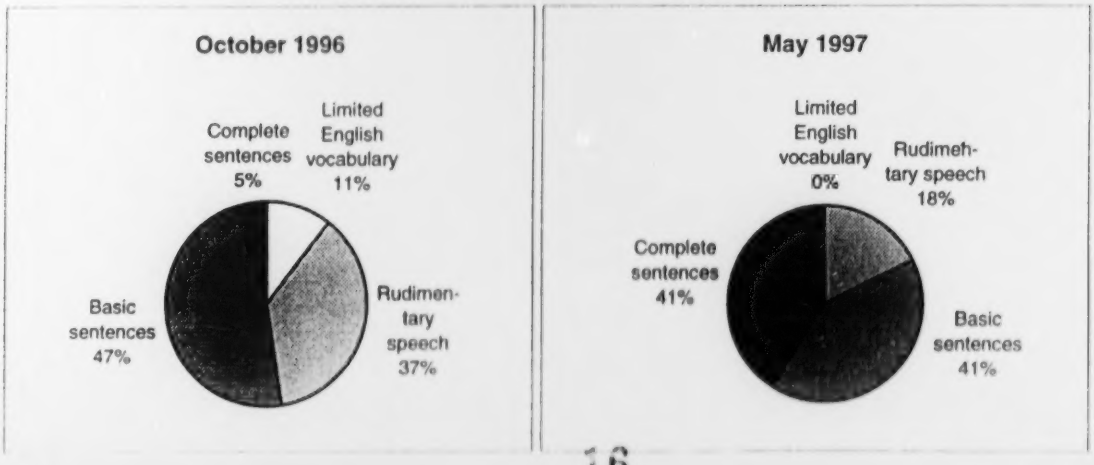
Speaks English Clearly


October 1996
Complete sentences & greater vocabulary 24%
Limited English vocabulary only 11%
Basic Sentences in English 29%
Rudimentary speech in English 41%
May 1997
Limited English vocabulary only 0%
Rudimentary speech in English 18%
Complete sentences & greater vocabulary 29%
Basic sentences in English 53%

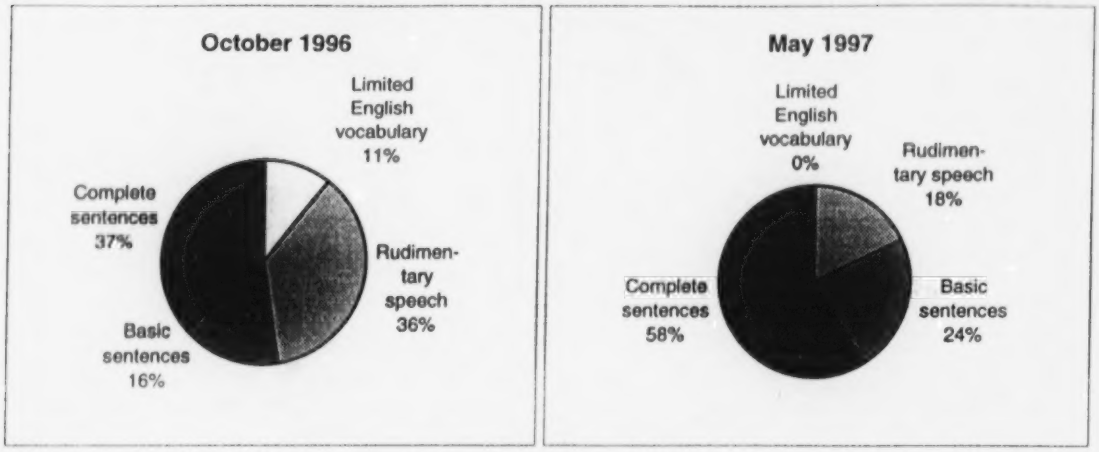
Explains Problems



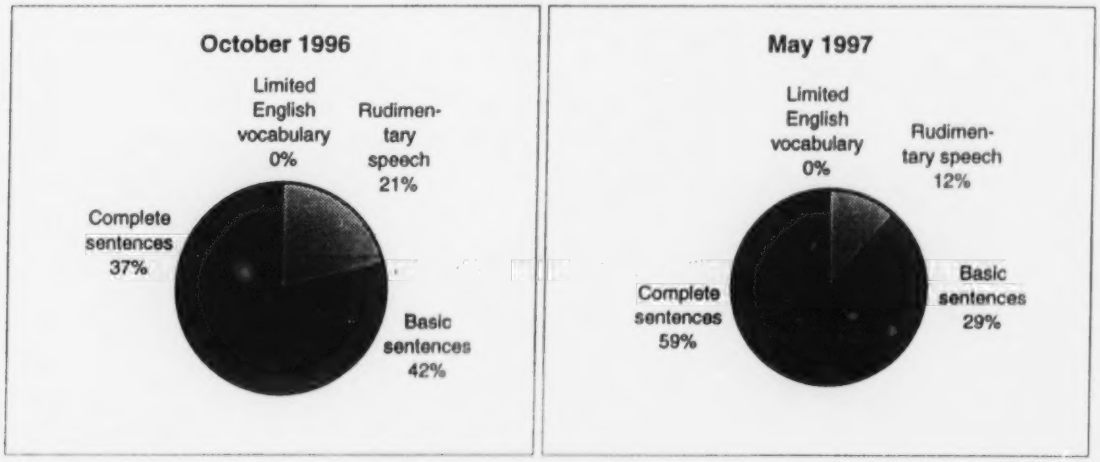
Explains Key Workplace Terms



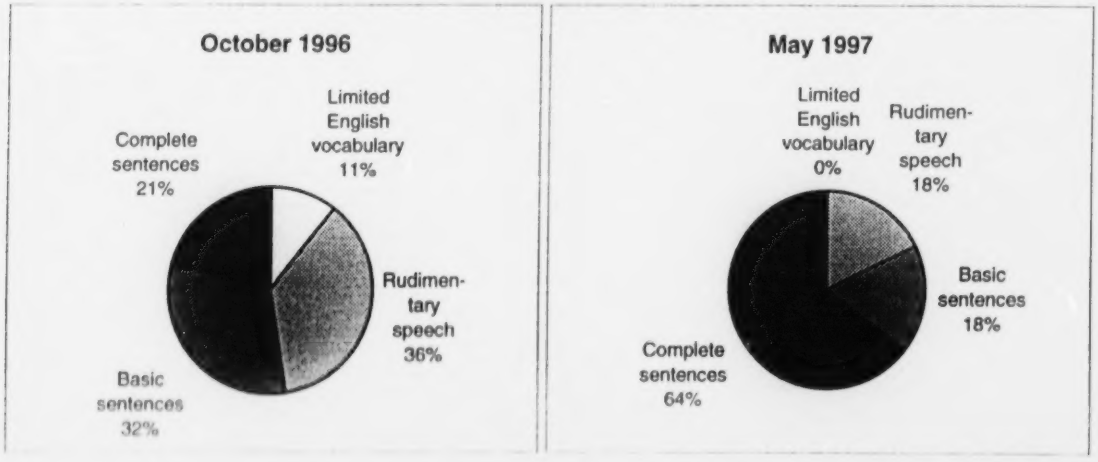
Reads and Comprehends Procedures



Explains Safety Signs



Reads and Comprehends Company Policies



BEST COPY AVAILABLE

CEI

CONTINUING E E EDUCATION

Original

May 5

Senat
315 R
Washing...,

Dear Senator Kennedy:

We would like to report to you on the success of our National Workplace Literacy Project grant, funded by the U.S. Department of Education to show businesses the benefits of establishing workplace education programs for their employees. The project initially involved five manufacturers in the Boston area and the Continuing Education Institute, a non-profit specialist in workplace education. The companies were Analog Devices, Boston Scientific Corp., NIDEC/Power General, Fire Control Instruments and American Engineered Components. It now includes three more: DRAKA-BIW Cable, Parker Hannifin Corp.-Chomerics Division, and M/A COM. At each company, Employee Involvement Teams direct and monitor the project.

Last year we awarded 43 high school diplomas to employees in partner companies. Over 300 people have been taught English as a Second Language in classes held at each company. Some of the results thus far:

- **Fire Control Instruments** (Newton), by the second year of classes, production reached quality goals due to the ESL program.
- At **Boston Scientific Corp**. (Watertown), 6 employees who had been in the Adult Diploma Program received promotions in six months after graduating from high school.
- **NIDEC/Power General** (Canton) was able to form production teams without hiring two additional supervisors as originally planned because of ESL classes.
- At **Analog Devices** (Norwood), members of the Employee Involvement Team developed a slide-tape and video presentation about the project to show at quarterly meetings of all employees in the plant.

Our survey of the 43 graduates of 1996 from the Adult Diploma Program found that six months after graduating from high school, 23% already have received promotions, 38% had added more responsibility on the job, and 31% were continuing their education (including 10% in college). The companies are committed to maintaining education programs and employee involvement teams after the grant runs out.

108 WATER STREET, WATERTOWN, MA 02172
Tel: (617) 926-1864
Fax: (617) 926-1865
E-Mail: cei@gis.net

The National Workplace Literacy Project works; it is a demonstrated success both as a model for employers and as a federal program. What we'd recommend is:

- Continuation of the program and expansion, especially to smaller companies
- Grants for at least three years, because it takes that long to acquire real literacy. The government share of the funding could decrease each year (75%- 50%- 25%) over the three-year period.
- A federal tax incentive to encourage companies to support their own workplace education efforts.

We hope to have the opportunities to discuss these ideas with you or your staff.

Sincerely yours,

William Vitello
Vice-President, Finance
American Engineered Components

Arthur Appel
Executive Vice President
Fire Control Instruments

Gene Hornsby
Director of Operations
Analog Devices

Thomas A. Keenan
Tom Keenan
President
NIDEC/Power General

John Wilson
Vice President, Operations
Boston Scientific Corp.

Lois K Solomon
Lois Solomon
Director of Training
M/A COM

Joseph Hussar
Plant Manager
DRAKA-BIW Cable

Les May, Ed.D.
TQM/HRD Director
Parker Chomerics

Lloyd David, Ed.D.
President/Executive Director
Continuing Education Institute